

BUZZ NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2022.



Diary Dates

Saturday 16th July 7pm – 10.30pm Bishop's Lydeard Village Hall

Waggle Dance. Buy tickets now, see Mary's article.

Saturday 1st August 1pm at the Apiary - Getting ready for Taunton Flower Show

Help needed to set up. Even an hour of your time would be most welcome

6-7th August Taunton all day Flower Show

At Vivary Park, Taunton.

Our "Bees and Honey" marquee is one of the most popular at Taunton Flower Show. We stage the Somerset Honey Show in addition to our own Honey Show. Help required including stewarding, selling goods, talking to members of the public as well as dismantling everything at the end of the flower show and packing up

Thursday 12th August 7.30pm the Apiary

Talk by Dan Basterfield on 'Preparation for a Better Season'.

Wednesday 11th August 7pm the Apiary

Clearing & feeding. Everyone welcome and help required.

Friday 13th August 7pm the Apiary

Removing supers. Everyone welcome!

Saturday 4th September from 10am Extraction Day

at Haddeo, Bathealton, TA4 2AG

Hosted by David Pearce in his well-equipped extracting room at his home. Bring a packed lunch and we recommend an apron as well.

Queen Rearing Workshop

Maggie North continued her queen rearing workshop with six people attending on Saturday 28th May at the apiary.



She gave a demonstration of grafting before supervising us students having a go. This was not as easy as it looks partly because the OSR nectar flow had ceased and the larvae had less royal jelly than one could have wished. Maggie examine each of our efforts and told us which grafted larvae should work, which were too big and which were damaged. Out of 10 attempts I only managed 2 possible grafts but other people were much more successful. Maggie had selected a strong hive and removed the queen to a nuc. 5 days earlier. The frame of larvae were placed in the centre of the brood nest after a thorough check to ensure there were no other queen cells in the hive.



We returned to the apiary on the evening of Thursday 9th June. We prepared the apideas and then carefully removed the frame of queen cells from the rearing hive, brushing the bees off each queen cell. Maggie was rather disappointed that only 9 larvae had taken.

Each queen cell was carefully removed from the frame (the little blue cups clicking out of the holder ensures no damage to the queen pupa) and wrapped in silver foil. One cell was returned to the hive.

The next job was to collect a cup of nurse bees for each apidea. It was cloudy and the bees objected to being disturbed in the evening. Rob had forgotten his wellies and his ankles paid the price!

A wrapped queen cell was inserted into each apidea and it was taped up. Maggie took them home to a dark cool room for 3 days and then transported them to Malcom Pearce's out apiary for mating. We are planning to check on them in a week or so's time when the queen should have mated and have started laying.

I do not think I shall choose to graft to raise queens as I don't need that many but the whole workshop was both educational and fun. Thank you Maggie.



President's Special Waggle Dance

By Mary Adams, President TDBK.



Well, here we are, and it's now 8 years since I last organised a Waggle Dance for Taunton Beekeepers. Back then in 2014 and also the previous year 2013, I had been working hard raising money for our new apiary clubhouse. In the end, the sum raised came to over £2000, so it was worth the effort. The clubhouse was opened by the Rt. Hon. Jeremy Browne on 19th July 2014 which would have been President's afternoon that year. At that time, our President was Jenny Gammon, and I was Chairman.

2 years ago, I wrote an article for the Buzz entitled 'My Journey into Beekeeping'. In this article I said: "Now we are living in a time never before experienced in my lifetime, but we are English and all things are possible with a little thought and planning. Having said that, of course everything has been put on hold for the time being, but the day will come when we meet again. Sadly not at the President's afternoon in July, but let's be positive and look forward to next year, when hopefully, we will be out the other side of Covid 19".

I thought last year, as this is my last year as President of Taunton Beekeepers, it would be appropriate to organise a Waggle Dance. We have not been able to socialise properly for a very long time, and although I know that Covid still raises its ugly head, it is time to try to get back to doing things together again.



So, I invite you to come and have some fun, some dancing, and some jolly good food and drink in Bishops Lydeard Village Hall on Saturday 16th July 2022 from 7.00pm until 10.30pm. You can buy your tickets (£20 each) from me either by phoning my mobile on 07752 723044 (leave a message if I don't answer and I'll contact you) or my landline 01823 432287 (I have a BT blocker phone so you may have to announce yourself before you are connected). Alternately, you can email me at:

kira@maryadams7.plus.com

If paying by cheque, it needs to be made out to: Taunton and District Beekeepers.

So come on you beekeepers and friends, pick up that phone or write that email! Time marches on, and there are plenty of good things to look forward to.

2022 Bee and Honey Show

by The Honey Show Secretary, Andy Glendinning.

Following a two-year absence, the Bee and Honey Show is returning this year to the Taunton Flower Show on the 5th and 6th August...Hurray!... and, by now, you should have all received details of the Show's schedule, detailing the Classes, Awards and Rules. Please let me know if you haven't and I will send you a copy, otherwise check out Taunton Division's area on the SBKA website.

The Show will still host the Honey Show for not only Taunton Beekeepers but for Somerset County, The County Show. Whilst the Taunton Classes will only be open to Taunton Beekeepers, the County Show is open to any BBKA member from Somerset or wider afield! So please, spread the word!

As we return to some sort of normality it would be great to see if we can make the 2022 Show a real success. So I am appealing to any and all beekeepers large or small, local or distant, new or old to shake off the cobwebs and remind ourselves of the skills and qualities that I know are still out there.

This year is going to be slightly special too as we have been invited to host our Show from within Taunton Flower Show's main Floral Marquee, a centre piece of the Flower Show. This setting means that we have a real opportunity to not only showcase the skills and qualities of you all, but will allow Taunton Beekeepers to host extra exhibits to display and inform the public of our work.

Coming out of the past two years has not been easy for any of us, but I'm sure we can rekindle the desire and passions that got us all into beekeeping. So, please have a look at the Show's schedule and enter as many classes as you are able. Remember, the Show is an opportunity for new and improving beekeepers to gain valuable feedback on what makes good honey or products. After all we all want to provide honey to our family and friends which is the best it can be!

Hope to receive your entry form soon and see you in August.

Best wishes of the season, Andy!

Skep Adventures

By Talitha Clarke

Following the wonderful skep workshop from Vanessa Woodford in January I caught a bug, the skep making bug. A cheesy start to this, but true, sadly. I can't seem to stop either making them or thinking about them. My hands were cut to ribbons and finger joints were sore but the course was so surprisingly fun and interesting that I couldn't stop. After completing my first skep at the workshop I still had half of the wheat straw left, I was determined to make another if not just to make some space in my house, as it takes up a bit of room and skep shaped straw is much more pleasing to look at than a sheaf tied with string.



During the making of the second skep, which took a few months as I could only do a bit at a time, I was taken to Quince Honey Farm as a birthday treat. I had heard from a colleague that it was a great place to go to and that there is a "honey museum" there. Which made me prick up my ears and I put the request in for future birthday treats. Quince Honey Farm is in South Molton, Devon and I had driven past it years ago, it looked a bit like a glorified children's leisure park/cafe/honey shop from the road and so not too appealing to me. But the word "museum" caught my attention as I thought that there could be some old skeps there.

We followed the sat nav and arrived not at the place I expected. It lies just off the A361 well sign posted before you get to South Molton. I was sure this was wrong but as we drove into a grassy landscaped drive, a skep in a stone walled nook greeted us and of course the car screeched to a halt so I could get out and take a photo. It all looked rather new and freshly created, there is a large shop selling honey, bee themed gifts and a fantastic award winning restaurant that is reasonably priced considering the size of the portions. In the seating area of the restaurant there is an observation hive against the window.



Outside the shop/restaurant is a large garden planted with bee friendly plants. Our guide - yes there are tours - said "...if it isn't good for bees it doesn't go in the garden". The site is being re-purposed from farm land to the Honey Farm and so the plants are not quite established and it all looks very new and promising. They are trialing different lavenders to see which ones the bees like best (white lavender at the moment) and have diverted a water course through the garden which has attracted otters. Our guide opened a hive for us (behind a glass wall) and with a camera showed us the queen and drones. They have bees living in skeps and logs, and we sneaked a peek at some displays yet to be made public. Bees were building comb in tall display cases where the comb was starting to hang very low. Within the garden are some skeps containing bees, this really is an immersive experience.

There is a working extracting room to view and a wonderful frame building workshop that is reassuringly cluttered. After making the obligatory bees wax candle and tasting 6 different types of honey we left satisfied, me more than the rest of my family because dotted throughout for decoration were old skeps of different shapes and sizes. But there was no contained “honey museum” as I had imagined with old equipment and hives, it was all very modern and in use and there is the Sheriff shop as you drive out.



Inspired by the old skeps seen at Quince I cracked on with my skep, even adding a hackle using the booklet “Make Your Own Skep” by Rev. E. Nobbs. Soon the day came to deliver it to my mother who would be the proud owner on her birthday. She lives in Plymouth and has a good garden for bees and maybe some might find their way into the skep. During my visit I went to the Barbican to find a book shop that I’d heard of. On finding it I also discovered that it has a great collection of old bee keeping books, some first editions. The owner assures me he has many more “out the back”. I especially enjoyed leafing through “The Golden Throng” and seeing that a previous reader had bracketed paragraphs and had written “rubbish” and “not worth reading” in some passages!

All in all Vanessa’s course has opened up a whole new world for me and I am eternally grateful. I now have to source some more wheat straw and make more skeps...

Links:

quincehoneyfarm.co.uk

The Book Cupboard barbook@btconnect.com

Instagram: @talithaclarke





Auction held on 3rd April

Plenty of second hand equipment was sold at the auction. The club raised enough to cover costs and add a little to club funds. Lots of beekeepers had a good chat and bought stuff they needed and some things they just fancied.

Veil Repairs ring Jenny on 01823 270465 / 07788407497